

Development Engineering Advisory Board Meeting
June 4, 2009
2:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Public Service Center
6th Floor Training Room

In attendance: Board members – Eric Golemo, John Graves, Greg Jellison, Jerry Nutter, Tim Schauer, Steve Wall; County staff – Ginger Blair, Ali Safayi, Sue Stepan

Visitors: Michael Bomar, David Bottamini, Mark Gassaway, Carolyn Heniges, Taz Roberts, Marty Snell

Administrative Actions

- Nutter started the meeting with introduction of audience and board members.
- The May 7, 2009, meeting minutes were adopted without edits.
- The Parking Lot was reviewed; there are currently no items on the list.
- There were no new correspondences to review.
- The July meeting date was moved from July 2 to July 9, due to the holiday.

Subcommittee Assignments

Nutter informed the group that an email was sent to the DEAB mailing list that included the letter requesting volunteers for the subcommittees. No responses were received. Therefore, it will be up to the chairs of the subcommittees to recruit members.

The group discussed the three subcommittees and determined who would chair each one. The outcome was:

- A. Development Engineering Processes Subcommittee.
 - Schauer will chair.
 - Bomar, Golemo, and Jellison are interested in assisting.
- B. Community Development Process Team (formally called Community Development Hot Topics)
 - Bomar will chair.
 - Will focus on process and coordination issues between Community Development and Public Works, and policy issues related to the code.
 - The Performance Bond Process task was moved to this subcommittee instead of subcommittee C.
- C. Engineering Issues with Clark County Code
 - Golemo will chair
 - Jellison is interested in assisting.
 - Will focus on Title 40 technical issues.

The group agreed that the subcommittees are informal groups among peers that do not receive staff support. Additionally the following was decided upon:

- Chairs will begin recruiting members, and at the July 9 meeting present their list of members and priorities.
- Clark County staff will not be formal members of the subcommittees due to budget restrictions. However, they can be invited to discussions as needed. Stepan will coordinate requests for any county staff members, including those outside of Development Engineering.
- Chairs of subcommittees should courtesy copy all DEAB members on meeting invites.

Development Engineering Fees

Stepan addressed the group and provided updates.

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has had two work sessions in the last two months regarding the Community Development financial situation. At the second work session the BOCC gave direction to proceed to a public hearing for fee increases. The hearing has been scheduled for June 16. If the commissioners support the fee increase, the effective day could be as soon as June 17.

Both Community Development and Development Engineering have been funded by the general fund. The general fund gap is significant and needs to be reduced. The impact on the budget is so severe that the BOCC is forced to look at raising fees for Community Development.

The question is if DEAB wants to take a position on the proposed Development Engineering fees.

Stepan referred to the handouts in the meeting packet. Included was background information for each fee that would increase and the actual cost of providing the service. These are the numbers that will be submitted to the BOCC.

The proposed fee increases are based on 100% cost recovery from fees for Development Engineering.

Schauer commented that one fee increase that jumps out at him is the new fee for Pre-application Conferences. With the increased fee, he thinks that the county is going to see more requests for waivers. The county may see more people calling around to get answers to their questions instead of paying to have the meeting.

Stepan responded that this is a good topic for the policy subcommittee to tackle. If the DEAB thinks that this service should be subsidized by the general fund, like the City of Vancouver does, then these are policy questions that should be asked of the BOCC.

Stepan reminded the group that the BOCC is interested in getting to the point of being able to charge fees on an hourly basis by January 2010.

The group discussed the hourly fee possibility, including the following points:

- Whether it was a realistic possibility that a base + hourly fee system could be determined and implemented by the beginning of the year.
- Whether the public and private side would agree on the number of hours it takes to perform a task.
- That the rewrite of Title 40 provides an opportunity to standardize what is submitted for a review, to help set a base of what time is required for the review.

Wall commented that the City of Ridgefield runs into similar problems as what he is hearing discussed. The challenge they face is that they do not require a retainer before performing the review and are now dealing with invoices that are not being paid.

Stepan referred back to the handouts and provided an overview of each page. There continues to be a general fund budgetary gap for non-fee work that Development Engineering performs.

Mark Gassaway commented that these services can not be funded by the Public Works Road Fund, nor can Development Engineering run on a deficit. The services will either have to be cancelled or be paid for by the general fund.

The members discussed the following:

- If development review supports the creation of jobs in the community, than it is not unheard of for the cost to be supported to some degree by the general fund.
- Other cities within the county subsidize the cost of review.
- If the development community pays these increased fees, then they will want to see services structured more like the private sector.
- Activity is likely to decrease even more if fees are raised. However, the amount of the increase is not likely to make or break a large project. It will mostly affect small projects and feasibility studies where the applicant is only taking the project to approval, not to construction.
- A vicious loop is likely to be formed where people will try to call around and receive services for free instead of paying for meetings/reviews, resulting in more unrecoverable costs to the county.
- The pre-application review cost seems high. Part of the county's higher cost is because there can be up to eight staff members involved, representing the various departments.
- A 100% cost recovery may not be realistic. The county has a large overhead that it is trying to get a small population to support.
- Based on today's fees, the community is supporting about 53% of the cost.

Marty Snell joined the meeting and presented the Community Development proposed fee increases. The group discussed the differences between the Development Engineering fee tables and the Community Development fee tables. In some instances, the two different department's fees need to added together to determine the total cost of the review or permit.

Snell also commented on the importance of the pre-application meeting and the ability to identify a project's issues early in the process as well as what information will need to be submitted for review.

DEAB members made the following motion:

"The Development Engineering Advisory Board reviewed the latest Development Engineering and Community Development proposed fee structures. After much discussion, the DEAB advises the BOCC to not implement a Clark County policy goal for a 100% fee recovery for all "direct project" activities. The DEAB supports and alternatively recommends an individualized fee recovery policy for individualized tasks or review functions, and suggests an overall average of between 50 - 75% fee recovery."

The motion was seconded and approved.

It was determined that DEAB members will draft a letter to be submitted at the June 16 BOCC hearing, based on this motion.

Public Comment Period

Taz Roberts commented that this was his first meeting to attend. He inquired about DEAB's previous involvement in development fee discussions.

An invitation was extended to Roberts to participate in the subcommittees, as well as a request to recommend participation to his constituents.

Additional Items

Stepan provided the group with a revised organizational chart for Public Works, reflecting the following recent changes:

- All development review engineers have been moved to the Design Section of the Public Works Engineering Program. They will be supervised by Tom Grange.
- Ali Safayi is also moved to the Design Section, and reports to Tom Grange. Ali will maintain his responsibilities related to the Development Engineering program.
- Sue Stepan will supervise Development Engineering's planning techs and OA.
- Due to decreased workload, the Final Land Division planning tech, Karen Webb, has been laid off. The Final Site Plan planning tech, Harriet Padmore, will assume her responsibilities.

Meeting Minutes Prepared by: Ginger Blair

Reviewed by: Sue Stepan

Board Adopted: July 9, 2009

Development Engineering Advisory Board - Parking Lot Items

#	PRIORITY*	SUBJECT	DATE REQUESTED	ORIGINATOR	ACTION
* Priorities: 1 = High/Important, 2 = Average, 3 = Low/long-term goal					